



CARE OF VIETNAMESE POND TURTLES

Our Turtle & Tortoise Care Sheets are meant as a general guideline to caring for your Turtle/Tortoise. Every specific species requires its own unique care - while many species are overlapping and can be kept with other species that have similar needs.

For even more details about the needs of a specific species - or for ideas about which different species will go well together (many do), please contact us by phone or email. Thank you!

GENERAL

This rare Asian turtle is somewhat of a success story for captive breeding. It has been considered extinct in nature for the last few years due to over-exploitation for the Chinese food market. Luckily, quite a few *M. annamensis* were imported in the late 1990s and were set up in thoughtful breeding programs. Now, it is most certainly extinct in nature, but is established and breeding in captive collections across the United States and abroad.

DISTRIBUTION

Mauremys annamensis was originally found in a very limited range in Central Vietnam.

SIZE

It grows to 7 inches - 8 inches (17 - 18 cm).

ENVIRONMENT & ENCLOSURE

In captivity, this turtle appear to be tolerant of a wide range of water conditions. pH seems relatively unimportant as long as the water is warm (78° to 80° F), well-filtered and aerated. Offer *annamensis* large enclosures with plenty of driftwood and piles of slate as they love to bask and males tend to be aggressive to unreceptive females and to other males. We place driftwood and piles of slate in the tub to add some "exercise areas" and to provide some areas for submissive turtles to retreat for safety. Indoors, these turtles can be set up in a large aquarium (60-gallon to 75-gallon). At the Turtle and Tortoise Preservation Group, adult *annamensis* are set up in our larger tubs (48" w x 84" l x 24" deep). This aquatic setup is sufficient to hold five or six adult turtles. We add an efficient filtration system, a shop light fixture with UVB-emitting bulbs, and a couple of basking spots with heat lamps mounted



above. We add a variety of floating and submerged aquatic plants to the enclosure. In addition to helping keep the water clean and healthy, plants will add some variety to the turtles' diets.

Outdoors, in moderately sized (10' x 10') ponds, you can keep six to eight of these medium-sized turtles quite easily. Plants, fish, and snails will add to the health of their environment.

DIET

These turtles are omnivores. Their dietary interests will usually be focused on eating floating aquatic turtle food, stray insects, snails, crayfish, and nibbling on the plants in the environment.

HEALTH

Imported *M. annamensis* arrived with the usual health-related problems seen in many Asian species. They were somewhat dehydrated and stressed and many were parasitized with nematodes. Shell rot and minor injuries were cleaned up with Betadine® scrubs and antibiotic creams. The parasites were removed with 2-3 treatments of Panacur®. Despite these combinations, that cause problems in many other turtles, Vietnamese Pond Turtles seemed to acclimate quite quickly, accepting floating commercial turtle food and earthworms and redworms, right away.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Ferri, V. 2002. *Turtles & Tortoises*. Firefly Books, Buffalo, New York. 255 pp.
- Fu, M., Z. Ermi, and M. S. Hoogmoed. 2001. *Identification Manual for Common Turtles and Tortoises*. The Endangered Species Import and Export Management Office of the People's Republic of China. China Forestry Publishing House.
- Gurley, R. 2000. *Keeping and Breeding Freshwater Turtles*. Living Art publishing. Ada, OK.